

The Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) is appointed by the Postmaster General. The group selects subjects for recommendation as future stamp issues, made with all postal customers in mind, including stamp collectors.

Background

Since 1957, the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee has evaluated all stamp proposals. CSAC members, appointed by the Postmaster General, provide expertise on history, science and technology, art, education, sports, and other subjects of public interest.

CSAC meets quarterly to review potential subjects. Meetings are open only to committee members and its deliberations are confidential. The committee's primary goal is to recommend stamp subjects to the Postmaster General, who makes the final decision.

The committee recommends an average of 25-30 subjects each year for inclusion in the stamp program. When making recommendations, CSAC considers the interests and needs of postal customers, as well as those of the stamp-collecting community.

CSAC does not have a permanent support staff. The Postal Service's Development group responds to many pieces of annual correspondence and handles all administrative matters.

Committee members

12 members as of September 2015

Gail Anderson

Partner, Anderson Newton Design; instructor, School of Visual Arts; author.

Peter Argentine

Founder, Argentine Productions, which specializes in media design and production for museums, national parks, visitor centers, science centers and television

Justin Bua

Award-winning artist and creator of genre known as "distorted urban realism." Host, executive producer and co-creator of upcoming Oxygen television series, "Street Art Throwdown."

B. J. Bueno

Founder, The Cult Branding Company; partner, Nonbox Consulting.

Dr. Cheryl R. Ganz

Author, curator of Philately Emerita, former chief curator of Philately, and former lead curator of the William H. Gross Stamp Gallery at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African-American Research, Harvard University.

Janet Klug, Chair

Philatelist, author, retired.

Carolyn Lewis

Former chief executive of Texwood Furniture Inc; former Governor, U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors.

Harry Rinker

Antiques and collectibles appraiser, author, collector, columnist, educator, and lecturer, host of WHATCHA GOT?

Maruchi Santana

Founder, The Brand Extension Agency.

Katherine C. Tobin, Ph.D.

Commissioner, U.S. – China Economic & Security Review Commission; former Governor, U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors; and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education.

Donna de Varona

TV sports commentator, Olympic swimming champion, select Director of the Board, U.S. Soccer Foundation.

The stamp selection process:

The Postal Service welcomes written suggestions for stamp subjects that help portray the diversity of the American experience for a worldwide audience. Any proposal that meets established guidelines will be considered. If you are interested in submitting an idea, you should:

Carefully consider the guidelines for appropriate stamp subjects (see What are the criteria for stamp subjects?)

Mail your suggestion to the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee at the address below. (No in person appeals are accepted.) Due to the time required for research and approval, ideas for stamp subjects should be received at least three years prior to proposed issuance. Each submission should include pertinent historical information and important dates associated with the subject.

Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3300
Washington, DC 20260-3501

Once the suggestion is received, the following occurs:

Stamp Development (the office within the Postal Service that manages the stamp design process and coordinates with CSAC) sends an acknowledgement that the proposal was received.

Stamp Development evaluates and researches the submission as necessary to ensure that the proposed subject meets the criteria.

The subject is placed before CSAC, and the committee takes one of two actions:

it does not recommend the subject , or

it holds the subject for future consideration

Working in advance, CSAC submits recommendations to the Postmaster General.

The Postmaster General ultimately approves the subjects and designs for all U.S. postage stamps and postal stationery. (Unfortunately, due to the length and complexity of the process, the Postal Service cannot notify the proponent if a subject is chosen.)
No credit or compensation is given for the submission of a stamp subject that is selected.

Stamp subject selection criteria:

The U.S. Postal Service and the members of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) have set certain basic criteria for determining the eligibility of subjects for commemoration on all U.S. stamps and stationery.

Following are the 11 major criteria now guiding subject selection:

- 1) It is a general policy that U.S. postage stamps and stationery primarily will feature American or American-related subjects. Other subjects can be considered if the subject had significant impact on American history or culture.
- 2) The Postal Service will honor men and women who have made extraordinary contributions to American society and culture. These remarkable individuals through their achievements in their respective fields have made enduring contributions to the United States of America.
- 3) Commemorative stamps or postal stationery items honoring individuals usually will be issued to celebrate births, anniversaries, and significant contributions.
- 4) A memorial stamp will be issued honoring deceased U.S. presidents following death.
- 5) Events of historical significance shall be considered for commemoration on anniversaries in multiples of 50 years.
- 6) A balance of stamp subjects includes timely, relevant and contemporary subjects that reflect the nation's diverse population. Themes of widespread national appeal and significance that showcase our nation's inclusiveness, events and persons will be considered for commemoration. Official postal cancellations, which may be arranged through the local postmaster, may be requested for significant local events or commemorations.
- 7) Statehood anniversary commemorative postage stamps will be issued at intervals of 50 years from the date of the state's first entry into the Union. Requests for observance of other state-related or regional anniversaries will be considered as subjects for postal stationery at intervals of 50 years from the date of the event.
- 8) Requests for commemoration of universities and other institutions of higher education will be considered for stamped cards in connection with the 200th anniversaries of their founding.
- 9) The stamp program commemorates positive contributions to American life, history, and culture; therefore, disasters will not be commemorated on U.S. postage stamps or stationery.
- 10) Due to the limitations placed on annual postal programs and the vast number of such locales, organizations and institutions in existence, it would be difficult to single out any one of the following for commemoration: government agencies, localities, non-profit organizations,

associations, and similar entities. Stamps or stationery items shall not be issued to honor religious institutions or individuals whose principal achievements are associated with religious undertakings or benefits.

11) Stamps may be issued for the five active-duty branches – Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, including Reserve/Guard components of the current organizational structure. Stamps for the major service academies will be considered on a case-by-case basis for 50-year anniversaries (or multiples thereof).

Artwork for stamp designs

When CSAC approves a proposed stamp subject, the Stamp Development design staff is assigned the task of developing the stamp design.

Stamp Development has professional art directors under contract to oversee the creation of stamp designs. The art directors, in turn, work with professional designers, artists, illustrators, and photographers to produce what has become one of the most publicly visible forms of art.

Because extensive verification is performed on each detail of a stamp's design and because production procedures are complex, design development usually begins several years in advance of issuance.

Approximately 25 stamp subjects are assigned each year, and a small percentage of those are created by artists new to the Postal Service. The design staff is continually searching for new talent, and the Postal Service annually receives more than 500 requests for information on how to become a stamp designer. Although personal interviews are not granted for any creative work, those interested should follow these guidelines:

Submit a portfolio of samples in print form (tear sheets, color copies, etc.) that best represent your style of work. Samples are not returned, and the Postal Service does not acknowledge receipt of samples by letter or phone. Neither original art nor slides will be accepted. Interviews are not granted.

Do not submit artwork or photographs for specific consideration as a stamp. Unsolicited stamp designs will not be reviewed or considered.

Submit portfolios to the following address:

U.S. Stamp Development
Attn: Stamp Design
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3300
Washington, DC 20260-3501